Chicken Couscous Tomato Cups

Eight filled tomato halves, two per light meal · Active 35 min · Total 1 hr 20 min

Skills: Making stable vegetable cups and hydrating fine couscous before baking

Ingredients

- 4 large firm tomatoes (about 2 1/4 lb/1 kg total)
- 1 tablespoon neutral oil (15 ml), divided
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (100 g)
- 2/3 cup dry quick fine couscous (120 g), not pearl couscous
- 2/3 cup finely chopped scooped tomato pulp with juice (150 g), taken from the tomatoes
- 1/2 cup water (120 ml)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano (0.5 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)
- Canned cooked chicken, drained (7 oz/200 g; buy enough cans for that drained weight)

Set out

9 x 13-inch/23 x 33 cm baking dish, at least 3 qt/3 L, Small saucepan with lid, Measuring jug and spoon, Strainer, Food thermometer

Allergens

wheat. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. Halve tomatoes across their middles. Scoop seed pockets without piercing walls. Chop and measure 150 g scooped pulp with its juice for the filling; refrigerate unused pulp promptly. Fit all eight cups in the dish and rub their surfaces with 1 teaspoon/5 ml oil. Roast empty for 15 minutes. Carefully pour away pooled dish juice.

2. Meanwhile heat remaining 2 teaspoons/10 ml oil in the saucepan. Cook onion for 7–8 minutes. Add measured pulp, 120 ml water, oregano, salt and pepper. Bring to a full boil, stir in couscous, remove from heat and cover for 5 minutes or its packet time.

3. Fluff couscous with a fork. Fold in drained chicken. Divide all the filling among the eight roasted tomato cups, mounding lightly without packing hard.

4. Bake for 15–20 minutes until tomatoes are tender but supported and the centers of the filled cups reach 165°F/74°C. Rest 5 minutes and serve two halves per person.

Use the center deliberately

Only 150 g of the scooped tomato pulp goes into the measured filling. Pouring in every last watery seed pocket can overload the couscous.

Ingredient labels

Quick couscous is normally wheat. Check chicken and seasonings for additional ingredients; tuna variation contains fish.

A useful detail

The onion/couscous stage overlaps the first tomato roast. Larger or colder cups may need extra final baking to reach the stated center temperature.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 3 days. Reheat a portion to 165°F/74°C throughout. Store filled cups in a shallow covered dish and reheat gently while checking the center. Freezing is not recommended because the tomato walls become watery.